

Thank you, Don Craig, for your kind and generous introduction.

Wow! I must say, it feels very strange to have a statue. Statues are for people much more important than myself. So to be included among these great surfing icons: Hobie, Bruce Brown, John Severson, Phil Edwards, and the others who will soon be honored here, ( all of whom, have made enormous contributions to surfing and its industry) is something words, alone, can't quite express, but I will try.

Thank goodness for the City of Dana Point and the Waterman's Plaza for recognizing the historic significance local residents have made to surfing, its industry and culture in general. I am so very humbled to be included within this extraordinary honor.

Many people have worked tirelessly to make today possible...first, the Dana Point City Council, including Mayor Joe Miller, Mayor Pro Tem Mike Frost, Council Members Michael Villar, Rick Viczorek and Jamey Federico. And City Staff members, Mike Killebrew, Kelly Renders, Matt Sinacori, James Shade-ill, Shayna Sharke, Scott fisher, Al Jacobo & Jaimie Tow. And finally, Jeff Miller & Capo Beach Crane.

The creator of all the magnificent statues you see here at Waterman's Plaza deserves special acknowledgment, especially from me: Artist, Bill Limbrook.

Bill and I have come full circle with this project, making it all the more special and meaningful for both of us. We both grew up on Beach Road and share many fond memories of those youthful years. Who would have thought that one day, a surfer and an artist would be celebrating a day like today, together!

Going through the creative process of this project with Bill, I was amazed at how laborious his task was from start to finish. The untold hours searching, sorting and picking the right photos upon which to base the statue according to its various angles and stages of development. The seemingly endless revisions. And as many of you know, I'm not exactly the easiest person to work with. I carry very little restraint of pen and tongue. And when it comes to a life-sized statue that will be in public view for God only knows how long, one tends to become particular about every detail. ("Uh, Bill, do you think you could make my ears a little smaller and my breasts a little bigger?")

Seriously, though, Bill was ever the gentleman and listened to my suggestions and those of others. I couldn't be more pleased with his work, graciousness and gift. Thank you, Bill.

I would also like to thank Mark & Karen Pion, who drove down from Northern California in this, their beautifully restored 1965 Triumph Spitfire. As far as Mark has been able to authenticate, this is the Spitfire that Triumph Motor Company gave me and featured in numerous print adds, including the back cover of Road & Track Magazine. So not only have I been restored in this statue, but my old car has been, too! Very humbling, indeed.

And finally, I want to thank every person here. Your passion and contributions enhance the spirit, and sport of surfing, and are the driving force that make events like this possible.

The very first surf contest I entered, when I was 13 years old, was held here at Doheny - long before the harbor was built. My dad and I entered the tandem competition. It was the first and last time I ever rode competitive tandem. No offense dad, but I wanted to pick the waves & surf them myself - not be a hood ornament!

I honed my surfing skills in front of the family home on Beach Road at the southern end of Dana Point and here at Doheny. And I rode for Hobie Surfboards, which was located just a little way up coast highway from here. I am definitely a product of Dana Point.

While this statue is of me, I like to think of it as an honor to all the women surfers who came before and after me. All the Trail Blazers who didn't accept the concept that surfing was a "man's sport." That women were expected to stay on the beach while the guys had all the fun! These were women who wanted to challenge themselves & the assumption that they did not belong in the surf. As I look out over the people gathered here, I see so many women who deserve credit for making this statue possible. Women who definitely "made waves," not only in advancing the sport's skill and performance levels, but also by continuously promoting, marketing and organizing competitive surfing itself.

Women such as Mary Ann Hawkins & Robin Grigg in the 40s, and Marge, Candy & Robin Calhoun in the 50s. Linda Benson, the 1st internationally recognized female surfer in the late 50s. Debbie Beachum, who in the 70s helped create the women's pro surfing tour & has been charging ever since. Jericho Poppler, who was a co-founder of WISA along with Mary Setterholm & has been a tireless supporter of women's surfing to this day!

And Mary Lou Drummy, who has been promoting amateur surfing through the Western Surfing Association for what seems like forever. Talk about dedication. Without these ladies and others like them women's professional surfing wouldn't have evolved into the sport it has become today. I thank each and every one of you, and surfing thanks you, too.

My life philosophy is that timing plays a huge role in life & it's something we have very little control over. Sometimes we are in the right spot at just the right time to take advantage of an opportunity, whether it be a set wave, a career path or other life events.

My timing was fortunate in that my career coincided with one of the biggest waves to ever hit surfing - the 60's. This was when a whole lot of diverse influences grew together to form one GIANT swell that swept across America, & I was lucky enough to be in the right spot to catch it... Southern California. Our coast became a confluence of Surf-themed music - Dick Dale, The Ventures, The Beach Boys, Jan & Dean.

Surf-themed movies - the Beach Blanket Bingo series, Gidget, & Endless Summer...

And surf inspired clothing, from Hang 10 to Ocean Pacific to aloha shirts.

People across the country became intrigued with the quirkiness of surfing and its characters. They wanted to become a part of it, and Madison Avenue (being the sharks that they are) quickly took the bait, and what once was limited to the immediate coast became a new sensation and even a lifestyle across the country.

I just happened upon that wave and rode it beyond Surfer or Surfing Magazine into mainstream magazines, such as Life, Look, Vogue, and Sports Illustrated, and sponsorships beyond board makers or wax companies to sponsorships, from Triumph Motor Cars to Bonnie Bell Cosmetics to Catalina Swimwear.

Being here right now & having this amazing honor is a testament to how good this ride has been for me. And I am so fortunate at this stage in life that my wave is still in motion. It is just getting a little smaller and a little slower as I get closer to shore.

So, it is with the greatest humility that I thank the great sport of surfing and all its wonderful, eccentric characters. All of you, for allowing me to drop-in on one hell of a way, one that has lasted over 60 years!